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Chair: Mr. Ružička ..... (Slovakia)
Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Ruiz Massieu

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Organization of work (A/C.5/69/1; A/C.5/69/L.1)

1. **The Chair** urged members to respect meeting start times and restrict the length of their statements so that the Committee could conduct its work efficiently. He invited members to consider the proposed programme of work of the Committee for the main part of the session and the note on the status of preparedness of the relevant documentation (A/C.5/69/L.1). A separate list on the status of documentation would be issued for the first and second parts of the resumed session. He wished to highlight some of the recommendations made by the General Committee in its first report (A/69/250) and adopted by the General Assembly at its 2nd plenary meeting. With regard to the rationalization of work, the General Assembly had requested each Main Committee to further discuss its working methods at the beginning of every session, and had invited the Chairs of the Main Committees, at the sixty-ninth session, to brief the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly, as appropriate, on the discussions on the working methods.

2. The Committee should complete its work for the main part of the session by 12 December 2014. In view of financial constraints, meetings of the Main Committees, including informal meetings, should start promptly at 10 a.m. and be adjourned by 6 p.m. In accordance with past practice, the requirement that at least one quarter of the members should be present in order to declare a meeting open and to permit debate to proceed should be waived. The General Committee had drawn attention to rules 99 (b), 106, 109, 114 and 115 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly regarding the conduct of meetings.

3. Efforts should be made to reduce the number of resolutions adopted, and resolutions should not contain requests for reports from the Secretary-General unless such reports were strictly necessary for the implementation of those resolutions or for the continued consideration of an item. Resolutions should be short and action-oriented. In addition, the Main Committees should merely take note of the reports of the Secretary-General or of subsidiary bodies which did not require a decision by the General Assembly and should neither debate nor adopt resolutions on them unless specifically requested to do so.

4. **Mr. Llorentty Solíz** (Plurinational State of Bolivia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that adequate time must be allocated to allow thorough consideration of the various items in the proposed programme of work and their successful conclusion. The Group remained concerned that important reports had yet to be issued. All documents must be issued in all official languages in a timely manner, in accordance with the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, so that the Committee could carry out its work effectively and take well-informed decisions. The failure of the Secretariat to present those reports in accordance with the rules of procedure often forced Member States and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions to work under time pressure and had a serious effect on deliberations.

5. The Group welcomed the balanced programme of work prepared by the Bureau, which should be adjusted throughout the session in the light of the progress made. In accordance with past practice, it would endorse the proposed programme of work on the understanding that it would be reviewed and amended after the first week, as needed. The Group had always stressed that negotiations should be conducted in an open, inclusive and transparent manner to ensure that decision-making took place among the entire membership, not within small groups. The negotiation process, a confidence-building exercise driven by Member States, must be allowed to run its course. Member States had a collective responsibility to take decisions that were beneficial to the Organization and enabled it to discharge its mandates effectively and efficiently.

6. **Ms. Tan** (Singapore), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that ASEAN would pay particular attention to the discussions on special political missions, human resources management and the programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015. The Secretariat must be given sufficient resources to fulfil the mandates approved by the General Assembly and ASEAN supported efforts to optimize the functioning of the Secretariat and improve mandate delivery. It also attached great importance to the discussions on the funding and backstopping of special political missions, including the creation of a separate account. Lastly, the Secretariat and the Advisory Committee were urged to ensure the timely issuance of their reports.

7. **Ms. Coto-Ramírez** (Costa Rica), speaking on behalf of the Community of Latin American and

Caribbean States (CELAC), said that funding and backstopping arrangements for special political missions was an issue of particular interest to the Latin American and Caribbean region since the mechanisms for financing those missions were inadequate. In order to enhance the efficiency and transparency of the Organization's budgetary process, a special and separate account should be established for special political missions, which should be budgeted, funded and reported on annually with a financial period of 1 July to 30 June. The financing of such missions distorted the regular budget and CELAC therefore urged the permanent members of the Security Council to ensure that their special responsibility for maintaining international peace and security was reflected in their financial contributions to all peace operations, including special political missions. CELAC was fully committed to a comprehensive reform of those missions and the need for a separate account was becoming more pressing each year.

8. It was crucial that all the necessary official documentation was available to ensure that the Committee could work efficiently and hold proper negotiations. CELAC therefore reiterated its call for strict respect of the principle of timely distribution of documents in all languages, in accordance with the rules of procedure and successive resolutions of the General Assembly on the pattern of conferences. Lastly, CELAC would actively engage in transparent, inclusive negotiations on all agenda items in order to reach agreements that were satisfactory to all Member States and conducive to the proper functioning of the Organization.

9. **Mr. Dosseh** (Togo), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that the programme of work should continue to be adjusted in line with developments in the negotiations. The Group remained concerned at the delays in issuing official documentation and called on the Secretariat and other stakeholders to ensure that all reports were issued on time so that the Committee could make informed decisions. The Group hoped that outcomes would be reached on the financing of peacekeeping operations, as well alternative funding and backstopping arrangements for special political missions, including the establishment of a separate account, which was long overdue. The Group would closely examine issues related to construction and property management at the Economic Commission for Africa and the United Nations Office at Nairobi. The Committee must conduct its work in an open, all-inclusive and transparent manner, and should respect the deadline set for completion.

10. **Mr. Vrailas** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and in addition the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that the Committee's heavy agenda contained important and complex items, and completing its programme of work by the agreed deadline would require a collective effort and constructive negotiations. The timely availability of documentation was a precondition for a successful outcome of the Committee's work but, despite the Secretariat's efforts, the submission of relevant reports had again been delayed. All documents were needed in all official languages, particularly on key issues such as the budget items.

11. **Mr. Minami** (Japan) said that the timely issuance of documents was especially important for discussions on the budget for special political missions and members should work to reach a consensus on all items by the deadline set. His delegation would closely scrutinize all potential additional requirements under the programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015 and called on the Committee to strictly observe the contingency fund ceiling agreed upon by the General Assembly by prioritizing activities in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 41/213 and 42/211. With regard to the budget for the biennium 2016-2017, the Secretariat was requested to take a fresh look at needs rather than merely extending the 2014-2015 budget. His delegation would participate fully in the discussions on budget reform and recosting, and urged the Committee to agree on feasible recommendations given that becoming more efficient and cost effective was no longer optional. It would also participate actively in negotiations on human resources management issues, since those items would have a significant impact on the future of the Organization.

12. The Secretariat must provide sufficient information to enable members to make fully-informed decisions concerning long-term accommodation needs at Headquarters, as well as measures to deal with the capital master plan shortfall. Concerning the strategic heritage plan, the Secretariat should explore the use of alternative funding mechanisms in order to reduce the recently increased overall costs of the project. His delegation anticipated that the overall peacekeeping

budget for 2014-2015 would greatly exceed its historical high and it would therefore work with other delegations to ensure that peacekeeping operations and special political missions were conducted in an efficient and sustainable manner. Lastly, his delegation attached great importance to the gradual implementation of the Umoja and International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) projects.

13. **Ms. Norman Chalet** (United States of America) said that the discussions on human resources issues would be critical to the success of the Organization and her delegation supported the new mobility policy as well as measures to establish strong performance management. It was also committed to enhancing the effectiveness of the Organization's internal justice system and hoped that the comprehensive review of compensation by the International Civil Service Commission would result in a new package that would compensate staff fairly but sustainably.

14. On transparency and oversight, her delegation hoped that the Office of Internal Oversight Services would be strengthened and its mandate protected. Public disclosure of internal audit reports was essential since transparency would enhance the reputation and credibility of the Organization. When making budget decisions members must consider how best to support the Organization and improve the delivery of mandates within the confines of responsible fiscal planning. Lastly, the DC-5 option had the greatest potential for meeting the Organization's long-term accommodation needs in New York in a cost-efficient manner and her delegation therefore strongly supported adoption of that proposal.

15. **Mr. Khalizov** (Russian Federation) said that his country traditionally advocated a balanced approach to both the regular budget and peacekeeping operation budgets, and all proposals on additional allocations must be carefully justified. Measures were needed to enhance budget effectiveness but seeking savings within existing resources should not affect the implementation of mandates. The Committee needed to make an urgent decision on covering the preliminary resource requirements for the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER) but his delegation expected comprehensive justification of the financial and staffing resources required as well as detailed information on the structure of the Mission and the functions of posts in order to make a well-informed decision.

16. The Russian Federation had joined the consensus on the new staff mobility policy but urged the Secretary-General to provide detailed responses on the many pending issues relating to the financial, legal and practical implications of that policy. In the light of additional information from the Secretariat, the Committee would be able to make decisions designed to fine-tune and clarify the modalities for applying the mobility policy.

17. The Secretary-General had issued bulletin ST/SGB/2004/13/Rev.1 on a new procedure for determining the personal status of Secretariat staff for the purpose of United Nations entitlements. The bulletin had substantially altered the legal basis for receiving benefits approved by the General Assembly at its 58th session and the Committee would need to examine the legal and financial consequences of that decision. Lastly, with regard to appointments and elections to subsidiary bodies, his delegation encouraged the Secretariat to prepare the traditional consolidated table with information on candidates.

18. **The Chair** said that he took it that the Committee approved the proposed programme of work on the understanding that the Bureau would take into account the views expressed and make the necessary adjustments.

19. *It was so decided.*

20. **The Chair** suggested that a deadline of 24 October should be set for the submission of candidacies for appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary bodies and other appointments and that the elections should be held on 7 November. He took it that the Committee had no objection to the suggestion.

21. *It was so decided.*

Agenda item 132: Programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015

United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER) and the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Ebola (A/69/404 and A/69/408)

22. **Ms. Malcorra** (Chef de Cabinet), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER) and the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Ebola (A/69/404), said that the Mission and the Office had been established following the adoption of General Assembly resolution 69/1 and on the basis

of the identical letters dated 17 September 2014 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council (A/69/389-S/2014/679). The preliminary requirements for the period from 19 September to 31 December 2014 for UNMEER and the Office amounted to $49.9 million. Pending completion of the assessment of requirements in the region and the submission of a detailed revised programme budget, the General Assembly was requested to authorize the Secretary-General to enter into commitments in that amount.

23. It was essential to strengthen national authorities' capacity to stop the spread of Ebola by making an impact on the ground as quickly as possible. Many United Nations staff had been working tirelessly in the affected countries since the start of the outbreak. The Mission was designed to supplement their efforts and was already operational, with 50 staff deployed in the region. Additional logistical materials and essential items such as personal protection equipment were arriving in the affected countries.

24. The Mission had joined the growing response of the international community and other partners in support of the national authorities. It would ensure that collective efforts to introduce an Ebola response plan in each country were united by harnessing the capabilities of all United Nations actors on the ground. It would be guided by the global strategic response plan developed by the Special Envoy in consultation with the World Health Organization (WHO).

25. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of Mission, Mr. Anthony Banbury, had arrived at Mission headquarters in Accra on 29 September 2014 and was conducting consultations with national authorities and other partners in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, the most affected countries. The consultations and ongoing assessments of the situation in the region would inform the detailed planning of the ways in which the United Nations and other partners could best support the Governments concerned. Such planning would in turn inform the detailed revised programme budget submitted to the General Assembly later in the main part of the session.

26. The swift response of the General Assembly to the Secretary-General's letter reflected the urgent need for greater collective effort to support the affected countries, given the pace at which the virus had spread. Despite the growing global response, however, time remained of the essence. The proposal in the Secretary-General's report would enable UNMEER and the Office to rapidly expand their activities to suppress the outbreak.

27. **Mr. Ruiz Massieu** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/69/408), said that the Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly should authorize the Secretary-General to enter into commitments in an amount not exceeding $49,943,600 for the requirements of the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response for the period from 19 September to 31 December 2014. It urged the Secretary-General to take its comments and recommendations into account in drafting the report containing the detailed budget submission for UNMEER, and would follow up on various matters when it considered that report.

28. **Mr. Llorentty Soliz** (Plurinational State of Bolivia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Ebola outbreak in West Africa had created an unprecedented and catastrophic humanitarian situation in the most affected countries. It had been declared by WHO to be a public health emergency of international concern, and emergency plans of action should be put in place to prevent it from spreading and to care for the victims. The Group therefore welcomed the establishment of UNMEER and expected it to receive adequate resources to fulfil its mandate. It urged the Secretary-General to quickly implement the five strategic priorities assigned to the Mission, in particular those designed to stop the spread of the disease, and would closely examine the staffing structure to ensure that resources were allocated to core activities rather than administration.

29. In the detailed budget submission, the Secretariat should provide comprehensive information on the structure of UNMEER. In the informal consultations, the Group would seek clarification regarding the operation of the multi-partner trust fund and the relationship between the fund's resources and those of the Mission.

30. Because many stakeholders were involved, the specific functions and tasks of UNMEER and other partners, as well as the lines of accountability and responsibility, should be clarified. The international

community should pursue long-term solutions by helping the affected countries to build resilient health systems and alleviate the economic effects of the disease. The Group looked forward to detailed discussion of the revised programme budget proposal and encouraged the international community to continue to support the most affected countries. The Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Group, in the declaration adopted at their 38th annual meeting on 26 September 2014, had acknowledged that the Ebola epidemic was a threat to health security at the national, subregional, regional and global levels and called on the international community to support the affected countries because global unity was the key to defeating the disease.

31. **Mr. Dosseh** (Togo), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that the outbreak of Ebola in West Africa continued to threaten lives in neighbouring countries and could spread further afield. The Group was concerned that current statistics might not reflect the gravity of the situation because of monitoring and reporting difficulties. Swift and comprehensive measures to halt the spread of the disease and address the public health crisis were needed. A coordinated and urgent international response was required in order to provide financial assistance, equipment, protective clothing, mobile laboratories and other facilities to the affected countries and the region with a view to containing the disease and ensuring that neighbouring countries and other regions had systems to prevent and trace infections.

32. The Group's endorsement of the proposal to authorize the Secretary-General to enter into commitments in the amount of $49.9 million did not constitute approval of the structures described in the Secretary-General's report (A/69/404), which must be revised to ensure that they responded effectively to the situation on the ground by reflecting the Mission's core activities. The resources must support substantive activities rather than a top-heavy administrative structure, and existing leadership structures in United Nations entities in the region and in Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone and other countries should be taken into account. He requested clarification regarding the ways in which the safety and security of staff on the ground would be ensured, and urged the Secretary-General to ensure that the principle of delivering as one was applied, given the involvement of various actors of the United Nations system.

33. **Mr. Vrailas** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Albania and Serbia; the stabilization and association process country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that in its statement to the General Assembly on 19 September 2014 the European Union had expressed deep concern regarding the crisis caused by the Ebola outbreak and had deplored the loss of life among citizens of the affected countries and international responders. The European Union and its member States were playing an important role in delivering assistance to the worst affected areas and had joined national and international efforts to address the disease as efficiently as possible. All partners must work in a coherent and coordinated way and the Mission should bring together the actors' capabilities and competencies without supplanting them or duplicating their efforts.

34. Given the exponential spread of the outbreak, with the number of cases doubling every three weeks and a high mortality rate, UNMEER urgently needed to become operational. Although his delegation appreciated that the Secretary-General was not currently in a position to provide detailed budget proposals or accurate information regarding the way forward, it looked forward to receiving more information on the concept of the Mission and its relationship with other United Nations entities, timeline, funding requirements, structure and organization in the detailed budget submission. During the discussions on that submission, it would make an initial assessment of the Mission's activities and of the lessons learned, with a view to establishing best practices. His delegation's agreement to authorize the Secretary-General to enter into commitments was without prejudice to any subsequent review of the Mission by the Committee.

35. **Mr. Kisoka** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that UNMEER should take into account existing leadership structures in the United Nations system, the region and individual countries, including United Nations country teams, to ensure that resources were used for core activities including the provision of medical training and facilities and logistical resources to eliminate Ebola. Clear leadership, reporting lines

and accountability were essential in responding to the crisis, given the many actors involved.

36. **Ms. Norman Chalet** (United States of America) said that her delegation acknowledged that the UNMEER planning process was ongoing but nevertheless expected further information regarding the ways in which the Mission would coordinate in the field and ensure an effective response to the outbreak by the United Nations and other actors. Her Government was committed to a collective approach to the threat.

37. **Mr. Minami** (Japan) said that at the United Nations High-level Meeting on Response to the Ebola Virus Disease Outbreak, held in September 2014, his Government had announced additional commitments of $40 million to combat the disease.

38. **Ms. Malcorra** (Chef de Cabinet) said that the unprecedented speed with which the proposal to establish UNMEER had been negotiated and approved showed that the international community understood the scale of the challenge, which no single Government or institution could meet. The tour of the region by the Head of Mission would enable further assessment of the proposal. The United Nations would deliver as one and build on the strengths and capacities of those in the system, but given the magnitude of the crisis the risk was not duplication of effort but failure to stop the outbreak. According to the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Ebola, a response on a scale 20 times greater than the current one would be needed to contain the disease.

39. **The Chair** said that as of 18 September 2014 5,000 cases of Ebola had been reported and 2,500 people had died, half of them in the last three weeks of the period monitored. A further 80 people were dying every day and the international community therefore needed to take action without delay. According to WHO, the cost of containing the outbreak would be $600 million.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.